United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WESTERN REGION

450 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE, BOX 36063

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30

(WR)RC

February 16, 1977

Mr. Raymond Aker
President
Drake Navigators Guild
2605 Waverly Street
Palo Alto, California 94306

Dear Mr. Aker:

In following up on our telephone conversation of February 14, we are enclosing a copy of our memorandum of November 23, 1976, to the Director, National Park Service, on the Sir Francis Drake Landing Site and Quadricentennial based on our understanding of the concerns raised by the Guild in the November meeting.

Also enclosed is a copy of the Director's response to this Office on the matter. As noted in the memorandum, it is not the Service's responsibility to try and settle the landing site controversy--particularly when the historical profession and Drake scholars have been unable to agree on a particular site. While we hope that research will continue in terms of the Drake Landing Site, we also hope that efforts will be concentrated on a suitable commemoration of the Quadricentennial in 1979.

We are aware that in 1973 the California Legislature established the Sir Francis Drake Commission to plan and execute suitable commemorative activities to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Drake's voyage. We feel that this is a sound approach and note that membership of the commission includes the advocates of the various landing sites.

Section 6 of Assembly Bill 252 authorizes activities to commemorate Sir Francis Drake and, at the same time, reserves the designation of a particular site to the Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee. The latter is now the Historic Resources Commission of the State and serves in an advisory role to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

We understand that the Chairman of the Historic Resources Commission has expressed an opinion that the evidence points to Marin County as the site of Drake's landing and that it is not possible to designate a particular site at this time.

In view of the above, we feel that it would not be suitable for the Western Region's Advisory Committee to become involved in the landing site issue.

As noted in the Director's memorandum of January 17, 1977, "We do not see why conclusive identification, however desirable, is essential to planning and staging the Drake Quadricentennial observance." "It is Drake and his achievements that we are recalling, and a probable landing site is not a condition for a successful commemorative observance."

We have expressed the concerns of the Drake Navigators Guild as we understand them to the Director, National Park Service, and feel that full consideration has been given to the matter.

In looking to the future and the Quadricentennial in 1979, the Bay Area National Parks may wish to cooperate or participate in the commemoration in coordination with the Sir Francis Drake Commission. This could take the form of a co-effort of Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area in events, lectures, and commemorative activities of an interpretive and educational nature.

The Sir Francis Drake Commission, of which you are a member, may wish to formally contact the General Manager, Bay Area National Parks, William J. Whalen, in terms of participation in the commemoration.

Sincerely yours,

Lyle McDonald
for

Howard H. Chapman
Regional Director
Western Region

Enclosures

cc:
Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historical Resources Commission, Office of Historic Preservation, Dept. of Parks & Recreation, P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento, CA 95811
WASO-560 - Cultural Resources Management Division
General Manager, Bay Area National Parks
Superintendent, Golden Gate
Superintendent, Point Reyes